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LETTER SENT TO CONSTANTINOPLE BY ALAFDHAL'S EX-MINISTER OF FINANCES.

HOWEVER much the remarkable letter, sent by Alafdhal's ex-Minister of Finances to Constantinople (vid. JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IX, 29-36), loses in value from the circumstance, that it stops at the very passage where its historical contents commence to excite the curiosity of the reader, yet it remains an instructive document both on account of its linguistic interest and its literary form, and is well worth the trouble of further investigation.

The epistle, directed by the fallen and impoverished financier to the congregation of Constantinople, as it seems, for the purpose of imploring them to save him, was written in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Meborakh, the Nagid of Egypt, who in 1098 had still been in office¹, was already dead, and the Vizier Alafdhal, who had supplanted the Caliph and was himself assassinated in the month of December, 1121², was still alive.

Most likely, the epistle we have was not the work of the petitioner, but the composition of some secretary, who was charged by him to write it; one who was skilled in that class of literature, and was certainly one of the cleverest Hebrew poets or authors among the Egyptian Jews.

Although we have lost the essential part of the document, which, to judge by the copious introduction, must have been very voluminous, nevertheless, enough has been pre-

¹ J. Q. R., IX, 38.

² G. Weil, *Geschichte der islamitischen Völker*, p. 327.

served to enable us to form a judgment about the stylistic characteristics of the author.

The difficulties which the author imposed upon himself seem almost insurmountable. Unfortunately, the beginning of the Cambridge *opisthograph*, or scroll, the writing on which fills the leaf backwards and forwards, is fragmentary, so that we are not in a position to decide how many verses are missing at the very commencement. But the thirty-four consecutive rhymes in תתות, which are preserved, are a performance which no other would have ventured to undertake, and which is not equalled, say, even in Jehudah Charisi's *Tachkemoni*, otherwise a storehouse of all sorts of *finesses* of the Hebrew language.

The task the author imposed on himself in the second poem of the introduction sounds still more incredible. Not only was it to exhibit a consecutive rhyme in ירים and, at the same time, consist of verses, the incipient and concluding words of almost every two of which should commence with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in due order, but it should display the additional trick, that the concluding word of every verse should be identical with the incipient word of the next, but should be used in a different sense. We have here an otherwise unknown and early use of *homonymy*, which was liked by the Jewish poets of Spain; particularly by Moses ibn Ezra, who attained great perfection in it. The Arabians called it *Tedschnis*, and the Hebrew authors *Tarshish*. These recurring verse-ends, or repeating words, give the poem of our Egyptian author a compact and rounded appearance. They enable us also to decide with certainty that nothing is missing in the fourth, twentieth, and twenty-first letter; although only one verse occurs, instead of the otherwise regularly occurring two verses. Every one of the conditions, as noted here, would have made the task a difficult one, but when united they appear almost impossible to accomplish. The 33rd *Macame* of Alcharisi shows an apparent analogy, but his greatest performance in that direction is

a poem of forty-four lines, every two of which commence with a letter of the alphabet in due order, and each of which commences and ends with the same word in different meaning. But besides Alcharisi having dispensed with the consecutive identical rhyme, the artificial achievement of the Egyptian author surpasses the latter also in this, that the homonymous word forms the connecting-link between the consecutive verses.

It will be readily understood that, in view of the scanty vocabulary of the Hebrew language, such artificial contrivances cannot be carried through without much violence. But it must be admitted notwithstanding, that our poet, in spite of the desperate difficulty of his task, never has recourse to entirely unlawful formations, but rather made the most surprising use of the aid afforded him by the language of the Targum and the Talmudic dialect.

The language suffered even more than the ideas from this self-imposed restraint, which had to be distorted and twisted in order to do justice to the form. We are nevertheless able to recognize the plan, which the author's employer intended to show. Starting from a general prayer, or benedictory salutation to Israel, the poem proceeds to pronounce a special greeting and blessing for the congregation to which the epistle was directed. The leading thoughts and sentiments, occurring in varied diction in both poems, are the praises of Israel, which remains true to its God and its Law in the midst of all sufferings; the hope and confidence that its enemies will be overthrown, that the Temple will be restored, and the nation will return to Zion. But even the poetical greetings to the congregation of Constantinople, consisting of thirty-two verses, all with the rhyme *יִבֶּה*, and twenty-two, all with the rhyme *יָמוּת*, also contain chiefly the idea of retribution, of punishment of the enemy, and of the reward of patient Israel.

The passage to the proper subject of the epistle is formed by biblical verses and scattered poems, small and un-

assuming¹, meant to prepare the reader for the fate that befell the petitioner, and which it is intended to narrate.

The four introductory parts are, therefore, the really difficult part of a relic of Egyptian literature, which has come to light out of the Genisa after seven hundred years of oblivion. But it is unfortunate that, besides the internal difficulties of the document, additional difficulties have arisen from the corrupt garb in which it has come down to us. As we have it printed before us at the present day, it contains a large number of passages which persistently baffle all endeavours to penetrate into their meaning. And even in those places in which the text has remained uninjured, some verses are simple enigmas, which cannot be solved without a knowledge of the allusions concealed in them, and appear therefore meaningless and impossible.

In order to prevent the commentary from becoming inordinately bulky, I present a *verbatim* translation of the introductory parts, and confine myself in the notes to that which is absolutely necessary to justify the rendering, which, at the first glance, frequently will appear to be incomprehensible. Although the text has essentially been altered, in consequence of the many conjectures and undoubtful emendations I was obliged to make, yet I did not place the new form thus obtained by the side of the translation, as might have commended itself, in order not to prejudice the mind of the reader in favour of my translation. I ask, however, the reader to compare the original, line by line and word by word, for in spite of the great pains taken, there still remain some very great difficulties to be solved.

TRANSLATION.

I.

[The friends of God], that are girded, the chosen ones,
But the enemies, who multiply, like flocks in the stables,

¹ P. 34, l. 7 at the bottom, read נחמתי instead of ויחמתי.

Crush, crumble, destroy with annihilation,
 That Edom fall down, when the pillars break to pieces.
 But blessing, well-prepared, rich, undiminished,
 Consolations full of pleasantness early [and late],
 Scented with Myrrh, with Aloes and Cassia,
 Glory and honour to him, who was bound up for ever,
 Who on setting up the rods was fortunate, (he peeled) by the watering-
 troughs,
 And holiness, and the rendering of sacrifices with full hands !
 May God again pass over posts and doors.
 And sealed.
 Famous by victorious power
 By temptations, by wonders and signs,
 In order to prepare freedom, recreation and repose to every soul,
 On festivals, new Moons, and Sabbaths,
 But to acquire courageously on weekdays and to pardon wrong trans-
 gressions,
 To give in thy possession a world full of repose,
 Nay, three hundred and ten of worlds
 In accordance with the verse : To give my friends 310 as their own
 (=שׁו).
 To beckon and to deliver the oppressed hosts
 [Thrust down] into the pit of perdition, them, the firmly founded
 pillars,
 By the hand of the cropped ones (Arabians), who boast of their
 amulets,
 And by the hand of those who worship statues, and idolaters
 Who deem their signs to be true signs,
 Who place ambushes and nets in the path.
 Fall and never raise again may the nations worthy of death,
 But progress and never get tired the intimidated hosts.
 May fly towards their cotes the simple doves,
 In order to deliver and enrich the poor Anathoth,
 That, into ploughshares, swords and spears may be changed,
 When once the female drawers of water will go to the open gates ;
 And drink water of rejoicing from the wells of salvation,
 And to be mindful of the one who was once persuaded as a bride,
 And to draw them on with human bonds, with chains,
 as it is said in Hosea xi. 4 :
 I shall draw her on with bonds of men and with chains of love.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1. The first lines of the poem were evidently so constructed that their three first words rhymed; they had therefore to be marked by some mnemonic, so as to protect them against errors of copyists. Consequently, the word ירדים, and the sign יא' must be lost here at the beginning. The current rhyme shows that, at the end, most probably the word ברות has to be put in. Before this, at least one line, containing God's blessing on Israel, the friends of God, must be missing.

2. The words פצע פרים צבים כנרים ברות seem, at first sight, to be hopelessly corrupt. But the rhyme demands that צרים be put instead of צבים.—ברות makes no sense, I therefore conjecture ברפתות, after Hab. iii. 17. Those that live in stables, the flocks, are symbols of fertility. The line must read therefore:

פֶּצֶץ פְּרִים צָרִים כְּנָרִים בְּרַפְתּוֹת.

3. רחק רצף חצף נופץ בבריתות, neither corresponds with the sign at the beginning, nor with the rhyme. Moreover, the words do not give a satisfactory meaning. I think that imperatives, all with the rhyme צץ, must be inserted here, and that the words are a prayer to God to destroy the enemies. In this connexion, the word בכריתות must be altered into בכריתות, and I read:

רָחֵק רִצֵּץ חֲצֵץ קִצֵּץ בְּכִרִיתוֹת.

For the correctness of this conjecture, compare the analogous passage in Charisi's 18th *Makame* (ed. Lagarde, p. 93), כי היה מצחו מרצץ וראשו מפוצץ וחביו מקצץ.

4. This almost desperately corrupted verse: מִקֵּץ יָדָם מָרָם, contains such monstrous forms, that we must start from the end, which is the only certain starting-point. If מָרָם must undoubtedly be altered into מִרְרָם, after Ps. xi. 3, the two preceding words must also rhyme in רָם. יָדָם must be simply expunged, as being super-numerary, and in contradiction with the sign at the top.

The case being desperate, I take מרם to stand, after Esther i. 13, for פרם=אדום, as it occurs not rarely; cf. Berliner, *Magazin*, 16, 274.—קרם means, as in Isa. xlvii, to bow, to bend. The verse would mean in the Messianic time: "Rome will fall into ruins, when the pillars fall." Although the mnemonic, when the letters are read one on the top of the other, seems to allude to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yet the author could not possibly have had that intention, because the פ in פרים would be against it.

6. משכימות requires some concluding word meaning "late." The rhyme must be תות, and therefore ובותות, from Dan. vi. 19, may be substituted, almost with certainty.

7. נפותות is derived by the poet from נפת.

8. ליבוד מאר gives either a poor meaning, or no meaning whatever. Of course, מאז must be read, after Gen. xxx. 20. By the representative of Israel, Jacob is meant here.

9. This is proved by the following verse, which obviously reproduces Gen. xxx. 38. I think that for צרה צדק must be read, in allusion to Gen. xxx. 33: צדקתי. Perhaps פצל must be inserted.

10. resumes the blessings of ver. 5.

11. ופסח may be a misprint for ופסח. The concluding word חלונות, seemingly so enigmatical, is easily explained as a slip for דלתות, by regarding the rhyme. ח is very frequently mistaken for נו and vice versa.

12. נחרות, impossible on account of the rhyme, and besides meaningless, must perhaps be altered into נחרותות, engraved, sealed.

17. בקחול, after Zech. xi. 8, perhaps a happy pun upon ובחול. עונות must perhaps be inserted, and ועייתות read.

18. מנחות is against the rhyme.

19. After Prov. viii. 21, and the well-known interpretation of that verse, according to which the numerical value of יש is taken to allude to the 310 worlds, which are the recompense of the pious hereafter, and from which the 310 Huris of Mahommed's paradise originated.

20. עמיתות must simply be altered into עמותות, and the

sign of interrogation effaced. The word, well known since Kalir, means as much as "corresponding with," as much as *לפי מה שנאמר*, כמו שנאמר. Cf. P. F. Frankl in the *Zunz-Jubelschrift*, 162 n, and Kaufmann in *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1885, No. XI, p. 469.

21. *לשרוק* in a Messianic sense recalls Isa. v. 26. A third rhyme, following the two first words, is perhaps missing here. For the meaningless *כחות* I read *כחותות*, an allusion to oppressed Israel, comp. v. 28.

22. The subject is *כחות* of the preceding line. Instead of *שוחה* read *שוחה*, the Ketib of *שיחה*; and *שחות* must be translated, "who sink" or "fall down." For *שחותות* read, after Ps. lxxiii. 9, *שחותות* from *שחת*, and translate "laid down," "thrown down."

23. Here the enemies are enumerated, Ishmael and Edom. The word *מתפרים* must be inserted in the gap. On the application of the term *קצוצי פאה*, for Arabians, cf. Zunz, *Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*, p. 450.

26. After Jer. v. 26.

27. *ממותות* can be retained, after Jer. xvi. 4 and Ezek. xxviii. 8.

28. *יגעו* must be altered into *יגעו*, according to Isa. xl. 31. *חתותות* is not a questionable word, it is simply to be translated "intimidated."

29. A description of the Messianic age, according to Isa. lx. 8. *פיותות*, see Hos. vii. 11.

30. "The poor Anathoth" (Isa. x. 30) means here Jerusalem, which would be purified and enriched, when the doves, scattered Israel, would fly towards Zion.

31. *להתם* = *להתם*, to make ready, as in Ezek. xxiv. 10. Cf. Isa. ii. 4 and Mic. iv. 3.

32. Gen. xxiv. 11 and 1 Kings vii. 50.

33. Cf. Isa. xii. 3.

34. *מופתות* must be altered into *מפיותות*, as is evident from the context. In accordance with Jer. ii. 2, God thinks of the love of Israel in her bridal state, persuaded by his call.

35. Cf. Hos. xi. 4.

II.

To the holy congregations, that were made eminent by their Rock,
 Since Sinai declared to be pure, free of sin, and undefiled,
 Who remove from their midst wrong-doers and sinners who are
 without justice,
 Who burn like torches and do not abide in darkness,
 Who enjoy in their pilgrimage the reserved bliss, since they observe
 the Law,
 Determined to join their Rock, and to pasture in its shadow,
 Who speak of his faith, before God had brought forth the mountains,
 Raise, [O God], thy arm for them, for the fool comes to understanding
 only by his discomfiture.
 But thy congregation assembles and brings their enemies to fall and
 mourning,
 But they make their own countenances black [through fasting],
 In substitution of sacrifices of rams and bullocks,
 Yet they thrive and multiply without number
 [Not shall have power] over them the strangers.
 The oppressors shall suffer hunger, but they will satisfy themselves
 and sing praises,
 Mow down their enemies and then become free,
 So that valley and mountains will overflow from the springs of
 salvation.
 And the messages of redemption will stream as from the hills summits.
 [Israel's] ranks, clearer and brighter than the ruby in their speeches,
 Fresh and verdant, refreshed by late and early rain,
 Sending forth arrows against those who destroy secretly,
 Exterminate with the edge of the sword,
 And menace the remnant with hypocritical favour,
 But who burn to bring their work of penitence to bear upon the
 power of Satan like battering-rams.
 They will feed on broad pastures, and the fullness of produce will be
 their portion
 To those, who impose upon themselves unrelieved difficulties, and
 cause no complaint,
 Who carefully observe the laws of Shechita, adorning themselves
 with their actions,
 Who bring such offerings, they will yet see grandchildren, whom
 every mouth glorifies.
 They await, to see again the love, which God gave them in their
 youth,

But the enemies cut off by the hand of those, who sprung forth from the beginning,
 And again in baskets of peeled willow-branches the first-fruits and the sacrifices of he-goats,
 But Seir and the sons of the Horites in impenetrable darkness.
 But they (Israel) shall study the six arrangements of the Talmud, although these are incomplete at the present day.
 Hosts, more numerous than flocks, shall again inhabit the destroyed cities.
 The enemies wake up, and their strong ones lie as corpses,
 But [Israel's] dead arise at daytime, when the clods of earth open.
 They, who solve enigmatical questions, and adorn themselves with wreaths of glory,
 Who awake the morning and make firm by signs that which they learned,
 Who eat their scanty bread in trouble, and content themselves with the poorest food.
 The graves open, and shouts of joy resound, as from cool drink, refreshing the soul.
 They who dig to find that which seasons the untoward trouble,
 They, who reject everything unclean, and mark their gates,
 They may find rich and blessed harvests with beaming countenances,
 Erect, they mark out the borders and never again will there be any strife, as it is said, Ps. cxliv. 15 :
 Our princes are erect, &c.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1. **אשר מעורם אמורים** is a designation of Israel, according to Deut. xxvi. 17. **אמורים** has here the meaning of "sifted," "distinguished," in the next word it means "named."

3. **ברים** used here in the meaning of Eccles. ix. 1.

4. **נור** is here constructed with the accusative only, as in Isa. xxxiii. 14.

5. Cf. Isa. v. 17. **נומרים**, Aram. = to learn.

6. I read **ובצלו דוברים**, and take **דוברים** as derived from **דברם**.

7. Cf. Ps. xc. 2. I punctuate **לָרֵת**. The word **הרים** in the double meaning, most likely, of "parents" and "mountain":

ושבנו הרים. וזכו הרים is also used by Sahal b. Mazliach. Vid. מאסף נדחים, ed. Harkavy, p. 198.

8. To explain this most obscure verse, הרים must be taken here as an imperative, addressed to God. This form is justified by Ezek. xxi. 31. For the enigmatical ירוע, I conjecture זרוע. The conclusion of the verse is based on Prov. xix. 25.

9. ערמה is here derived from קהל "the heap." קהל is Israel, the sign of interrogation must therefore be deleted. Israel assembles in its houses of prayer and *tries* to overthrow its enemy by the aid of its prayers.

10. שחר is used here in the sense of "making black," and particularly, of causing the sallow, colourless appearance brought about by fasting. The word is frequently used in that sense in the Talmud. Fasting, as a substitute for sacrifices, is an idea frequently occurring in the prayers.

11. ולא ישלמו must perhaps be inserted.

12. The sign of interrogation after זמרים must be deleted, the beginning of the next line showing that this word is the correct reading. It is here derived from זמר "song," while in the next word it means "to cut off."

14. חושרים is here derived from 2 Sam. xxii. 12, חשרת in the sense of "overflowing." Cf. Job xxx. 6.

15. Here חושרים seems to be used in the sense of "sending out," according to *Taanith*, 9 b. For כי מראש I read כמראש. Cf. Luzzatto's known emendation of כי מנלה into נמחתה. The end of the verse is a reproduction of Numb. xxiii. 9.

16. The conjectures, by which alone this line can be explained, may be considered as certain. For מאורם read, according to Exod. xxviii. 17 and xxxix. 10, מאורם. The meaningless גלוייה must be altered into גלויים.

17. מאשרים=אשורים. Israel stands there fresh and verdant, favoured by constant rain.

18. If I understand rightly the following lines, they give a description of Israel's struggle against the enemy who spreads his net in secret. יחרים is derived from חרם "a net."

19. כומרים is synonymous with יחרים from חרם, and derived from מכמר and מכמרה "a net." It is said of the enemy, that he destroys Israel, at one time by violence and the sword, and at another time by favour and flattery (cf. Joel iii. 5).

20. However forced my translation may appear at first sight, the insurmountable difficulties in this line can, nevertheless, hardly mean anything else. כומרים means here "burning," "ardently longing." The expression שפך occurring in connexion with works of siege (cf. Ezek. iv. 3; xxi. 27), our poet thinks it allowable to combine it with כרים. The battering-rams, with which Israel longs to attack the wall of Satan, the accuser before God, are the works of his penitence. For תשובה, the poet uses also the plural, וירצה, בתשובות, p. 35, l. 4. The new-Hebrew קמץ is used instead of משכן. Cf. Isa. xxx. 23 and Ezek. xlv. 13, 14.

21. לחומרים. This word is taken here in the Talmudic sense of "strictness" (חומרות), and the meaning is that Israel burdens itself with the law in all its strictness, and does not seek the lenient aspects thereof, so as to give no occasion (צווחה) (Talm. גרים, הגרים) for a complaint.

22. הגרים, a play upon the word הגרמה, which denotes one of the injunctions connected with the law of slaughtering animals. מקטרים I consider to be the Aramaic for מקשרים (vid. Isa. xlix. 18).

23. The meaning of בנינים is clear, and the sign of interrogation is to be deleted. We have here a paraphrase of Ps. cxxviii. 6: "Israel, offering such sacrifices to God, may be found worthy to see grandchildren, and live to be crowned (cf. Isa. xix. 11) and glorified by every mouth." Cf. in the prayer *Nishmat* וכל פה לך יודה.

24. מכחרים means here "to await," according to Job xxxvi. 2. The single moments of Israel's expectation are dwelt on in the following lines: Victory over their enemies, Restoration of the temple and its sacrifices, Resurrection of the dead.

25. משורש נעורים is the plural of נעור, Nehem. v. 13.—משורש נעורים is formed after Isa. xi. 1 and Dan. xi. 7. Both here and in

the following verse נצורים must be read for נוצרים, the ן is the *mater lectionis* of the Kametz.

26. נצורים קלופים is an allusion to the Mishnah *Bikkurim*, iii. 8: בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה.

27. Cf. Gen. xxxvi. 20, and Zunz, *Synagogale Poesie*, p. 437 sqq.

28. נער=נער; cf. 1 Kings v. 7. I give it only as a conjecture, that we have here an allusion to those treatises of the Mishnah, to which the Talmudic exegesis has not been preserved.

29. ושב=נשב must either be completed into ושב=נשב, or corrected into וישיבו after Isa. liv. 3.

30. For וחזקיהם, which is meaningless, וחזקיהם must, of course, be read. It seems that פגרים is applied here in the Talmudical sense of the word, "tired, lazy" (cf. 1 Sam. xxx. 10, 21).

31. "The day on which the clods of earth will split," is the day of the Resurrection.

32. לפאר צפרים is a phrase invented by our author, in imitation of צפירת תפארה, Isa. xxviii. 5.

33. צפרים, Aram.=שחרים; cf. Ps. lvii. 9 and cviii. 3. The conclusion of the verse is an allusion to the Talmudical interpretation of Jeremiah xxxi. 21, as exhorting to use mnemonic signs for the better knowledge of the Torah (*Erubin*, 54 b).—צרים, cf. Isa. viii. 16.

34. צרים, perhaps after 1 Sam. ii. 32. Cf. Ps. cxxvii. 2.—פת קברים is a plural of the sing. פת קבר, *Machshirin*, ii. 8.

35. Cf. Prov. xxv. 25. כבמים=כמים.

36. קרים again refers, perhaps, to Israel, which "digs" or endeavours to make its unbearable sufferings bearable by arguments (טעם). כחלמות רירים is a free transposition and plural formation of חלמות ריר, Job vi. 6.

37. This verse seems to allude to the laws of purity, strictly observed in Israel.—שערים המצוינים are the מצוות, בהלכה, the traditional explanations of these very precepts about purity. Cf. the Talmud's interpretation of Ps. lxxxvii. 2 in *Berachot*, 8 a.

38. שְׁעָרִים may be an allusion to Gen. xxvi. 12. The following words are from Judges viii. 18, and the Talmudic passage, *Sabbath*, 67 a : כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי מַלְכִּים הֵם.

39. הַנְּבוֹל must be corrected into הַנְּבוֹל, according to Joshua xv. 9, to which passage this line refers.—מִסּוּבָלִים is a misprint for מִסּוּבָּלִים. The poet says, that Israel sets for itself fixed measures and limits for everything, by means of its precepts, and therefore there is no discord among them, as is said in Ps. cxliv. 14.

III.

These are the holy congregations, who originated in Jerusalem, the footstool of the Almighty¹, who live in the land of Edom, in the royal city of Bostra, called Constantinople, whither they were driven in consequence of the abundance of their sins². They act in love, in order that salvation be preserved for them. Oh, may they become thousands, and tens of thousands, that their reward may extend and spread, beyond expression, in order to destroy the hatred and to reveal the love, which was so much diminished, and stayed since that day³, but now becomes green again like plants⁴. So as to be called by a new name, and return to its former condition; that the blood-stained oppression come to an end, and that Israel be strengthened, as it is adorned⁵ with the Torah, which strengthens the soul, and broadens by understanding, by questions and answers, as it was revealed on Sinai, to make light everything that is difficult, and all that is light⁶, and to diffuse the decision to the North and South, to East and West. To heal apostasy with rich love, and to cause penitence to be accepted in favour. That Israel may fill the world with fruit⁷, instead of its sterility; that sacrifices on the Altar be re-established⁸, and Judah's offerings be again accepted, as it is said in Malachi iii. 4 : "Israel's offerings will be received again."

¹ For הָרוֹם read הָרוֹם, Lam. ii. 1. בֵּית קֶדֶשׁ is an Arabism for Jerusalem.

² בְּעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ הַרְבִּים = בְּרִיב חַיְבָה. The sign of interrogation after חַיְבָה must be deleted.

³ For מַחֲעַבְבָה read מַחֲעַבְבָה.

⁴ For נִצְמָחִים read נִצְמָחוֹם.

⁵ חָמַר in the sense of "embroidering," "adorn" according to Prov. vii. 16.

⁶ הַחֲמִירָה לְהַחֲמִיר requires further explanation, the origin of the phrase being unknown to me.

⁷ I read : חָחָה נִיבָה פִּי חָל הַנּוֹבָה, according to Jer. xxvii. 6.

⁸ Cf. Hos. iii. 4.

